

Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

California

Community-Based Red Flag Program Flying High

Since 2001, National Fire Plan Wildland Urban Interface funding has allowed California BLM to support hundreds of community-generated, community-specific projects that reduce the risk of wildland fires in communities-at-risk. Among these innovative projects is the Greater Laguna Coast Fire Safe Council's Red Flag Program. This program is designed to provide a highly visible reminder to all citizens in the region to be extra careful and vigilant on the days when the Santa Ana winds blow - a condition that has fueled many devastating wildfires.



Local businesses do their part to increase awareness of severe fire conditions.

The Red Flag Program is managed and staffed by citizen volunteers. These community members follow pre-specified patrol routes along the wildland interface (the canyons and hillsides) to watch for fires and/or suspicious activity. Simultaneously, stores and businesses display fire safe council-

provided red flags along the highways and streets of the region to alert drivers and others to the hazardous conditions at hand.

Volunteers are alerted through a series of contacts that begin with the National Weather Service's alert of changing weather conditions that could bring high winds and low humidity over the region. When Red Flag Program coordinators are notified the program unfolds in the following stages:

Stage I. Fire Weather Watch.
(Generally 48-72 hours in advance of weather event)

Coordinators will alert volunteers by email/phone of the watch condition and establish who will be available for patrol duty and ask them to stand by.



A fully outfitted vehicle ready for Red Flag patrols.

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Stage II. Red Flag Warning. (24 Hours in advance) Coordinators will notify volunteers of their patrol duty; partner, route, and shift.

Stage III. Red Flag Alert
Coordinators will notify volunteers of the Alert status and have them begin the patrols. When this stage occurs, the coordinator of the business owner Fire Alert Flag Program will call each business and tell them to begin displaying their flag.



It's hard to miss this Red Flag alert!

Stage IV. Cancellation

When coordinators receive notice that the Red Flag condition no longer exists, they will immediately notice both the active patrols and stand by patrols that the alert is no longer in effect. The coordinator of the business owner Fire Alert Flag Program will contact each business and tell them to store their flag until the next alert.

Volunteers use their own vehicles and provide their own personal cell phone, and binoculars. All volunteers must attend a training class after which they are issued a Ready Bag for all supplies (Red with the Fire Alert Logo), a photo ID card, route maps and area maps, a cap with logo, magnetic identification signs for the sides of the car (Red with the Fire Alert Logo), a flag with for window of car (Red with the Fire Alert Logo), and a disposable camera.

In conjunction with the Red Flag Patrols, business owners along major thoroughfares in the area also participate by raising a 3' X 5' Red Fire Alert flags at their businesses to inform the community of Stage III Red Flag Alert conditions.

Following every activation of the Fire Safe Council Red Flag Patrol, an assessment is made with the goal of solving problems and improving all future deployments. In a typical fire season, there are three to five Red Flag Alerts.

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

The popularity and success of this program has generated many inquiries from other communities that experience similar wind events and as a result the program is expected to grow in the future. BLM is proud to have supported such an innovative program and looks forward to their continued success in keeping their community members informed and on alert during dangerous conditions.



Community volunteers ready for patrols following training.

Contact: Donna Hummel (916) 978-4436

Cooperation Leads to Successful Fuel Reduction Project



Tribal members and agency staff work to clear overgrown brush from residential property.

The Bishop BLM Field Office recently assisted the Lone Pine Piute Indian Tribe with a fuel reduction demonstration project. The tribe had received a grant to clear defensible space around a residence on their reservation to show their members how to make their properties more fire safe. Tribal members, along with staff from the

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...



BLM's chipper was put to good use during the project.



Work crew with the by-products from the demonstration project. The large pile of chipped material was made available for tribal members.

US Forest Service, cleared years of dense, overgrown vegetation. BLM provided a chipper and operator to deal with the cut material. The chipped materials were then made available to the tribal members for landscaping, mulch, and dust control.

The project was a complete success and an excellent example of collaboration and coordination between the Indian community and the two local federal agencies. Tribal members now have an on-site example of a fire safe property and a reminder of how small, individual efforts can contribute to a cumulative benefit for the community.

The completion of this project generated a lot of enthusiasm and a local focus on firewise principles. As a result, tribal members are now in the process of creating a Fire Safe Council in Lone Pine, California with the hopes that the community can expand and perpetuate their efforts to create a fire safe community.

Contact: Matt Kingsley
(760) 872-5055

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

South Knob Prescribed Burn

The South Knob Prescribed Burn, located in Lassen County, California near the town of Adin, is a project designed to reduce decadent Big Mountain Sage and dense stands of Western Juniper on over 1500 acres.

This project is a cooperative effort between the Alturas BLM Field Office, the California Department of Forestry and Fire, and a local landowner and BLM permittee.

The purpose of this project is to reduce the fire hazard created by many years of excluding fire from the ecosystem. In addition, this prescribed fire will help to restore

habitat and ecosystem health by reducing encroaching juniper, returning nutrients to the soil, and stimulating growth of grasses and forbs. As a result, forage will be improved for both wildlife and livestock.



Smoke fills the air as the South Knob prescribed fire gets underway.



Firefighters ignite stands of decadent sagebrush.

Burning is being done to promote a mosaic of burned and unburned areas creating habitat diversity. The objective is to burn 75% of the project area. Approximately 400 acres have been burned thus far this fall when prescriptive conditions have been met.

Contact: Jerry Wheeler (530) 233-7910

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Hitting Hazardous Fuels - HARD!

The Bakersfield BLM Field Office is in the process of conducting several strategic hazardous fuel reduction projects in the Kern River Valley. The area, located east of Bakersfield California, is home to many small, dispersed communities and experiences heavy tourism and recreational use centered on the Kern River, Lake Isabella and plentiful public lands. It also has a long history of catastrophic wildfires. During the



Thinned vegetation is stacked for future pile burns.

summer of 2002 alone, over 60 homes were lost during the Deer and Borel fires. In an on-going effort to increase safety and reduce the risk of wildfires, BLM initiated several Wildland Urban Interface projects on BLM public lands near the communities of Tillie, Sawmill, Hungry Gulch, Alta Sierra, Kernville, Lake Isabella and Wofford Heights.

The Tillie 3 and Sawmill/Hungry

Gulch hazardous fuel reduction projects are being done to reduce decadent fuels along roadsides providing access and egress to & from these communities. BLM fire crews from Southfork, Midway, Kennedy Meadows and the Kern Valley Hotshots have spent hundreds of hours this fall cutting, piling, and chipping through the dense chaparral mix to create a critical break in the fuels along these critical evacuation routes.

The cut brush is being either chipped or piled for winter burns. When completed, over 80 acres along over six miles of road will be thinned of overgrown vegetation. These projects will provide several immediate benefits including safer evacuation route for residents, improved access for suppression activities and viable locations from which firefighters can make a safe stand to control a wildfire. The Tillie project also connects several previous BLM and Forest Service efforts in the area, including a fuel break and mosaics of vegetation created by prescribed fires, that are all contributing to reducing the risk of catastrophic fire. Future plans include extending these projects to other local communities at risk.

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

December 13, 2002



In addition, one of the most significant outcomes of these highly visible projects is that community members are more aware and involved in their own pre-fire activities. The Kern Valley Fire Safe Council has become a strong advocate for community involvement and personal responsibility. They have been the recipient of several BLM Community Assistance grants that are helping provide community chipper days, develop homeowner firewise materials, and complete demonstration projects that will serve as local examples of defensible space.

BLM continues to be an involved community partner, committed to reducing the area's risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Contact: Debbie Santiago (661) 391-6097



Continuous chaparral fuels of the Kern River Valley contribute to the history of catastrophic wildfire.



Crews feed the chipper to dispose of thinned vegetation.

Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

Office of Fire and Aviation

National Awards Presented at BLM Fire Leadership Team Meeting

National awards for exceptional success were presented to BLM employees and offices during the BLM Fire Leadership Meeting in Billings, Montana on December 4. The awards were in two separate categories, with both an individual and group award in each.

The Excellence in Ecosystem Management in the group category was presented to the Rawlins, Wyoming Field Office and was accepted by Field Office Manager Kurt Kotter. The District was recognized for its exceptional work in leadership, management, planning and other aspects of carrying the objectives of the National Fire Plan forward.

The individual Excellence in Ecosystem Management award was presented to John Shive from the BLM Utah State Office for his leadership and support in implementing a broad range of programs supporting National Fire Plan goals.



(l to r) Tim Murphy, Deputy Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, Kurt Kotter, Rawlins, Wyoming Field Manager, Lynda Boody, Medford, Oregon Field Office, Jim Francis, California State Office, John Shive, Utah State Office.

The National Wildland Urban Interface group award was presented to the Medford, Oregon Field Office, and was accepted by Lynda Boody. The award recognized the broad and well-implemented program for wildland urban mitigation and prevention over the course of the year.

The individual National Wildland Urban Interface award went to Jim Francis of the California State Office for his tireless efforts in developing partnerships, leadership, and collaborative work leading to outstanding success during the year.

December 13, 2002



Snapshots

Successes of BLM hazardous fuels projects ...

In recognition of major efforts to ensure safety in every aspect of fire management, the Elko, Nevada Field Office was presented with the National Wildland Fire Safety Award. Field Office Manager Helen Hankins received the group award, and Elko Fire Management Officer Joe Freeland received the individual award.



Tim Murphy presents awards to Elko, Nevada Field Office Manager Helen Hankins and Fire Management Officer Joe Freeland.



New Mexico Fire Management Officer Bob Lee makes a presentation to Pat Moore, Office of Fire & Aviation.

BLM's Fire Management Officers made a special presentation to Pat Moore of the Planning and Resources Group at the national office for her exceptional efforts to help field offices meet heavy workload demands during the year.

December 13, 2002

